

Re Type for VF MEM RM

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SLIDE RULE - MEM 145

The slide rule was donated to East Central Community College / Burton Library by Mr. Ovid Vickers (re: Dr. Shelby Harris' estate) August, 2003. Dr. Harris served as either or both mathematics instructor and Head of the Math Department from 1963 to 1999 at East Central. The slide rule was used in Dr. Harris' classroom as a supplementary tool to assist students with mathematical calculations. One part of the slide rule, the cursor or runner is missing.

*Historical Notes on the Slide Rule

One source states that as early as the second decade of the 17th century, Edmund Gunter (1561-1626) indicated the principle of logarithmic calculations along a straight line. On his scales of multiplication and division were performed as addition and subtraction of lengths by means of a pair of dividers. Afterwards, William Oughtred (1574-1660) used two of Gunter's lines sliding along each other, making the use of dividers unnecessary. Oughtred's lines were made in both straight and circular form. During the middle of the 17th century, Edmund Wingate (1593-1656) and Partridge used a rule sliding between parts of a fixed stock, an instrument similar to the present slide rule. The slide rule acquired its final shape in the course of the 19th century. Industrial mass production of the slide rules began towards the end of the 19th century. A slide rule consists of three parts, including the rule, the slide and the cursor or runner. The rule contains the scales marked A, D, and K and sometimes, other scales. The slide moves within the rule in grooves. The cursor, with one or three vertical lines moves across rule and slide. As a rule, one uses the middle vertical, the others play a role in the calculation of circular areas and cylinder volumes.

*Source:

Kustner, W. Gellert and Kastner, M. Hellwich, eds. The VNR Concise Encyclopedia of Mathematics. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976.